

VZCZCXRO7900
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHOS #0291/01 1161111
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 261111Z APR 07
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8804
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 8628
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0303
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0283
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0282
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0275
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000291

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2017
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: PDP DISSONANCE ON GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

REF: LAGOS 269

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: In an April 21 conversation with the Consul General, Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Aminu Wisdom (STRICTLY PROTECT) said the People,s Democratic Party (PDP) was split between two camps with conflicting views of the April 14 gubernatorial elections. Which view ultimately prevails would determine how tenaciously PDP would attempt to hold those southern states opposition parties might have won. In addition, Wisdom said the PDP had successfully pressured the Senate President not to spearhead an initiative to establish an interim government and nullify the elections. End summary.

PDP Split On Post-Election Strategy

12. (C) In an April 21 conversation with the Consul General, Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Aminu Wisdom said there were two camps within the People,s Democratic Party (PDP) regarding the April 14 gubernatorial elections. The moderate camp believed the PDP had been too aggressive in attempting to capture too many states, said Wisdom. Moderates thought the PDP should concede Lagos and Edo States as well as Ondo or Ekiti State in the Southwest. In addition, continued Wisdom, the moderates felt the PDP should not try to field a candidate in the Imo State gubernatorial contest where there currently was no PDP candidate. This contest is slated for April 26. Prominent members of this camp were Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Nuhu Ribadu, Education Minister Oby Ezekwesili, and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory Mallam Nasir El-Rufai.

13. (C) The second group were the hardliners. These included Presidential Advisor and Anambra State Governor-elect Andy Uba, Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustees Tony Anenih, Vice-President for the PDP, Southwest, Bode George, and PDP National Chairman Ahmadu Ali. In addition, this group was

funded by wealthy businessmen such as Alhaji Dangote. The hardliners were intent on winning as much as possible and crushing the opposition, explained Wisdom. Their argument now was that, with the results having been announced, any hint of compromise would embolden and give life to a battered opposition and thus lead to further compromise. Finally, there existed a murky third camp within the PDP. Members of this group publicly supported the PDP, but surreptitiously helped the opposition, said Wisdom. Governors Lucky Igbinedion and James Ibori were two such examples.

FG Thwarts Move To Disband INEC, Nullify Elections

¶4. (C) The federal government (FG) was aware of the opposition's plans to initiate legislation calling for an interim government, observed Wisdom. Specifically, President Obasanjo knew the opposition had urged the National Assembly (NASS) to reconvene on April 24. The plan was to introduce a bill to declare an interim government, disband the Independent National Electoral Commission, and nullify the elections. Opposition figures thought this tack had opportunity because of the large-scale disenfranchisement of extant NASS members. In spite of being a member of the PDP, Senate President Ken Nnamani had been precluded from being a power broker within the party in his own state. This was tantamount to political emasculation, Wisdom bemoaned. Nnamani would like to exact revenge upon those who had so brazenly humiliated and embarrassed him, claimed Wisdom. Other NASS members have been similarly shut out from retaining their seats and degree of influence within their constituencies, Wisdom noted.

¶5. (C) Yet, Wisdom thought the PDP had successfully pressured
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Nnamani to step back from leading this legislative rebellion. The federal government had not completely quashed the initiative. By pressing Nnamani to back away, some of the steam from this had escaped, he concluded. (Comment: Nnamani may not only have been affected by PDP pressure. He no doubt was also aware that this would be an uphill battle for the legislature. Legally, the National Assembly would be hard pressed to assert that a legislative body, itself subject to elections, could nullify those very same elections. Ruling on the validity of elections is the reserve of the courts. Otherwise, a legislative body could perpetuate itself indefinitely. Thus, any such legislation would face a stiff challenge in the courts. Politically, this avenue faces an even more obvious roadblock. To become law, it would have to be signed by the President. The NASS would then need a two-thirds majority to overcome the veto. By law, the President has 30 days to sign or veto a bill. If the President does not sign the bill within 30 days, the bill returns to the National Assembly, where it must pass by a two-thirds majority in each house in order for it to become law. End Comment.)

¶6. (C) Although he wants to remain influential, President Obasanjo realizes that after May 29 he will cease being the country's first citizen, recalled Wisdom. During a recent conversation, Obasanjo uttered an old Yoruba expression, "the first person the king kills is the kingmaker." In other words, once in presidential office, Umaru Yar'Adua would be his own man, and Obasanjo would give him a wide berth, asserted Wisdom. Wisdom said the Yar'Adua camp had been confident of winning the election. Even before voting took place, insiders within Yar'Adua's camp were beginning to scribble their lists of appointments to government and ministerial posts.

¶7. (C) Wisdom said the mood within the government and PDP for the April 21 election was fairly relaxed. All was going well according to PDP calculations. This contrasted sharply with

the fallout in the South on April 14, which led to a stormy Executive Council meeting on April 18. At this meeting, Obasanjo lashed out at PDP Vice President Bode George for having misled him by overestimating PDP's strength and underestimating the opposition in key parts of the South, recounted Wisdom.

18. (U) This cable was a joint effort by Embassy Abuja and ConGen Lagos.

BROWNE